**Sport psychology**

**Introduction**

Sport psychology is the scientific study of the behavior of individuals in sport contexts, including both individual and social aspects of behavior.

Participation in sport is increasingly recognized to be of value in many cultures because of the contribution of sport to health and well‑being. Participation in sport also serves to enhance international cooperation through competitions, thereby acting as a platform for communication and cross-cultural understanding.

This option addresses cognitive, sociocultural and biological aspects of sport psychology. The biological level of analysis is used in arousal theories. The cognitive level of analysis is used in the investigation of topics such as goal-setting and motivation. The sociocultural level of analysis is applied to team cohesion and the motivation of individuals.

Controversies related to areas of sport psychology are the issues of overtraining, burnout, and the way in which individuals and coaches deal with injuries.

**Learning outcomes**

**General framework (applicable to all topics in the option)**

* To what extent do biological, cognitive and sociocultural factors influence behavior in sport?
* Evaluate psychological research (that is, theories and/or studies) relevant to the study of sport psychology.

**Emotion and motivation**

* Evaluate theories of motivation in sport (for example, cognitive-evaluation theory, achievement goal theory, self efficacy theory).
* Using one or more research studies, explain the role of goal setting in the motivation of individuals.
* Discuss theories relating arousal and anxiety to performance (for example, optimal arousal theory/inverted U hypothesis, drive theory, reversal theory).

**Skill development and performance**

* Evaluate techniques for skill development used in sport (for example, repetition, mental imagery, attention control/concentration training).
* To what extent does the role of coaches affect individual or team behavior in sport?
* Explain relationships between team cohesion and performance.
* Describe aids and barriers to team cohesion.

**Problems in sports**

* Discuss athlete response to stress and chronic injury (for example, stress based model, grief reaction response, relaxation techniques).
* Examine reasons for using drugs in sport.
* Discuss effects of drug use in sport.
* Compare models of causes and prevention of burnout (for example, cognitive affective stress model, negative training stress model, investment model).